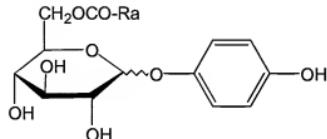


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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) An arbutin ester compound represented by formula (1):

Formula (1)



wherein Ra is selected from the group consisting of:

$R_1-CH=CH_2$, wherein R_1 is a single bond, an alkyl group or an arylene group;

$R_1C(CH_3)=CH_2$, wherein R_1 is a single bond, an alkylene group or an arylene group;

$R_1-COOCH=CH_2[[2]]$, wherein R_1 is a single bond, an alkylene group or an arylene group;

R_1-COOH , wherein R_1 is a single bond, an alkylene group or an arylene group;

$R_1-COO-R_2$, wherein R_1 is a single bond, an alkylene group or an arylene group; and R_2 is an alkyl group or an aryl group; and

$R_1-[R_3-CH=CH-R_4]X-R_5-CH_3$, wherein R_1 , R_3 , R_4 and R_5 are each independently a single bond, an alkylene group or an arylene group; and X represents a number of repeating units and is 1 to 6;

$R_1-C(CH_3)_3$, wherein R_1 is a single bond, an alkylene group or an arylene group; and

R_1-CH_3 , wherein R_1 is a single bond, an alkylene group or an arylene group.

2.-10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously presented): A composition that inhibits tyrosinase comprising, as an active ingredient, at least one of the arbutin ester compounds according to claim 1.

12. (Previously presented): An external preparation for the skin, comprising the composition according to claim 11.